

# THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

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A BUFFALO HOUSE



# "THE CITY OF HOMES"

## SOME BUFFALO HOUSES

By VIRGINIA ROBIE

DELAWARE Avenue is to Buffalo what Euclid Avenue is to Cleveland, Summit Avenue to St. Paul, Commonwealth Avenue to Boston, and the Lake Shore Drive to Chicago,—with this difference, that Delaware Avenue is more beautiful. Many of the dwellings on this famous street have the character of country houses. They are surrounded by broad lawns, shaded by fine trees, and inclosed by hedges and high fences of ornamental iron. The passer-by catches glimpses of a white portico or a vine-covered gable, but is seldom permitted to see the entire house. Nature and the landscape-gardeners have done much for Delaware Avenue and provided each dwelling with a setting.

Coupled with smooth green lawns and great shade trees is an exceptionally fine architectural treatment. There are many homes here that could not be duplicated in another city. At the head of North Street is a notable group designed by McKim, Mead, and White. On the corner of North and Delaware is the residence of George L. Williams, Esq.; below on the avenue side is the house of his brother, Charles H. Williams, Esq.; and on the opposite corner is the home of Robert K. Root, Esq. One may imagine that the architects took special pleasure in building these three houses, for each one gains beauty from the other two. The George L. Williams house, whether seen from the Delaware Avenue approach or from the North Street side, is extremely imposing. Great gateways

separate it from the avenue, and give it an air of seclusion. It is beautiful at all times of the year, but especially so when seen through the delicate tracery of early summer foliage. The yellow tones of the brick gain a deeper shade from the light green of the maples and from the richer green of the numerous bay-trees that dot the lawn. The wrought-iron gates on the Delaware Avenue side are part of the decorative scheme.

The home of Mr. Charles H. Williams is an admirable foil in color. Red brick is used here with a stone trim. Shade trees and luxuriant vines make a framework of green about this dwelling, which has both dignity and distinction. These two fine examples of the work of McKim, Mead, and White are sufficiently alike for each to gain from the proximity of the other, and sufficiently unlike to prevent any suggestion of monotony. They are closed in summer, and so must be considered as winter residences only. Many country houses have less attractive settings and less outdoor feeling.

The interiors of both dwellings are filled with rare and beautiful things from remote corners of Europe. In the house of Mr. George L. Williams is a room hung in old Italian brocade, and ceiled with Spanish cedar. The deep red tones of the textile are harmonious with the dark wood of the high wainscot. At the windows are long hangings in the same rich red, and this color is reflected in the rugs. The great stone fireplace has andirons from



RESIDENCE OF CHARLES H. WILLIAMS, ESQ.  
McKim, Mead & White, Architects





RESIDENCE OF HARLOW C. CURTISS, ESQ.  
Esenwein & Johnson, Architects

an Italian palace. The furniture is old French and Italian, with one cleverly constructed coffer by Davenport of Boston. There are high-back chairs of Florentine workmanship, similar in design to the famous pair in the Isabella Gardner museum in the Fenway. But there is no hint of a museum in the arrangement of the room. The attraction of each piece of furniture is heightened by the article placed near it, which is seldom true in museums, and seldom true, it may be added, in private houses, where the rooms are filled with rare and costly furniture. To give a personal touch to chairs and tables which have been used by kings is a most uncommon art.

The dining-room is a spacious apartment furnished in heavily carved dark oak. Above the high wainscot the walls are covered with leather in Cordovan shades, which make an admirable effect with the somber tones of the

woodwork. The beautiful oak fire-place shows how successfully the old wood-carvers could combine grace with strength. The grapevine is the motive and is rendered with delicacy and spirit. Oak is an unwieldy medium in the hands of modern carvers.

Among rooms that may be mentioned are a Louis XVI. reception-room, an English morning-room, and a Flemish supper-room. The walls of the latter are hung in Flemish tapestry of quaint pattern. The big fireplace is faced with blue tiles, and upon the walls are many old Delft plates and much fine pewter. It is hard to get away from this room. Its great round table and high-back chairs bespeak so much good cheer, which the soft lights and generous hearth accentuate. The dining-room is a formal place as befits the house, but this room carries an air of delightful informality. On the second floor are many bedrooms. One is fur-



HALL IN THE RESIDENCE OF ALEXANDER M. CURTISS, M.D.  
Esenwein & Johnson, Architects





AN INTERIOR IN THE COUNTRY CLUB, BUFFALO  
George Cary, Architect

nished in Empire style, another is pure colonial, a third is filled with the pieces of old Dutch marquetry, and a fourth has quaintly painted furniture picked up on the Continent. The walls in each case are typical of the style under consideration, and such details as electric-light fixtures and key-plates are in perfect accord.

The home of Mr. Charles Williams has several notable apartments in period decoration. There are two French rooms, one in Empire and the other in Louis XV. style. An interesting feature of this house is a loggia with a fountain. Many details here, as in the other dwelling, were personally designed by Stanford White.

The Robert K. Root house calls to mind some of the old New England homesteads. The pitch of the roof and the lines of the gables suggest the Warner mansion of Portsmouth, which has served as an inspiration for many new homes. The Buffalo house is a particularly good example of this type. It cannot be classed as a reproduc-

tion, for the architects have given it their own impress, but its atmosphere is not that of a modern structure. It carries a hint of age in its gray bricks and fine white doorway. The interior is full of interest. The wall is hung in a red paper of a large and highly decorative design. The woodwork is ivory-white. The staircase is especially interesting, and so is the big fireplace, which is the dominant feature of the hall. The living-room has green walls, and the reception-room, which is furnished in old French pieces, is also hung in green. A notable room is a big den, or smoking-room, paneled in wood and hung in prints.

The dining-room is furnished in brown, and is wonderfully harmonious in color. This room is circular, which admits of an unusual treatment. There are three windows at one end, two facing the lawn and one looking into an inclosed porch. These windows conform to the circle, as do the built-in cupboards at the opposite side of the room. Behind traceried



LIBRARY IN THE RESIDENCE OF J. G. MILBURN, ESQ.  
George Cary, Architect





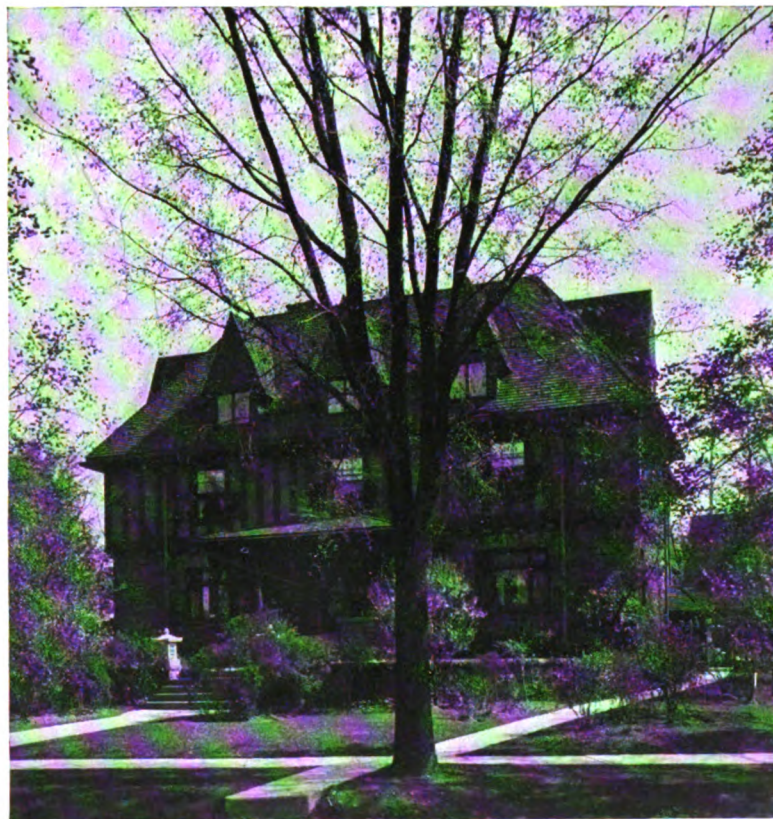
RESIDENCE OF GEORGE L. WILLIAMS, ESQ.  
McKim, Mead & White, Architects

doors are shelves filled with rare old glass. The wainscot is of mahogany, toned a beautiful brown, and above this is brown leather meeting a ceiling of a paler shade. The fireplace is of marble of a warm brown tone, and upon the hearth are bronze andirons of old Spanish design. The furniture is mahogany. The chairs are upholstered in Cordovan leather, in soft shades of green, brown, dull red, and orange. At the windows are long curtains of silk rep, the color of the walls. A few dull gold frames provide high lights, and a unique shade of Tiffany glass, hung low over the table, shows a fine color harmony of greens, browns, ambers, and soft purples. The charm of this room cannot be conveyed in black and white.

Another Delaware Avenue house of unusual interest is the home of Harlow C. Curtiss, Esq., designed by Esenwein and Johnson. The exterior, with its dull red bricks, white trim, and green blinds, promises a fine colonial interior, and no disappointment is felt when the threshold has been crossed.

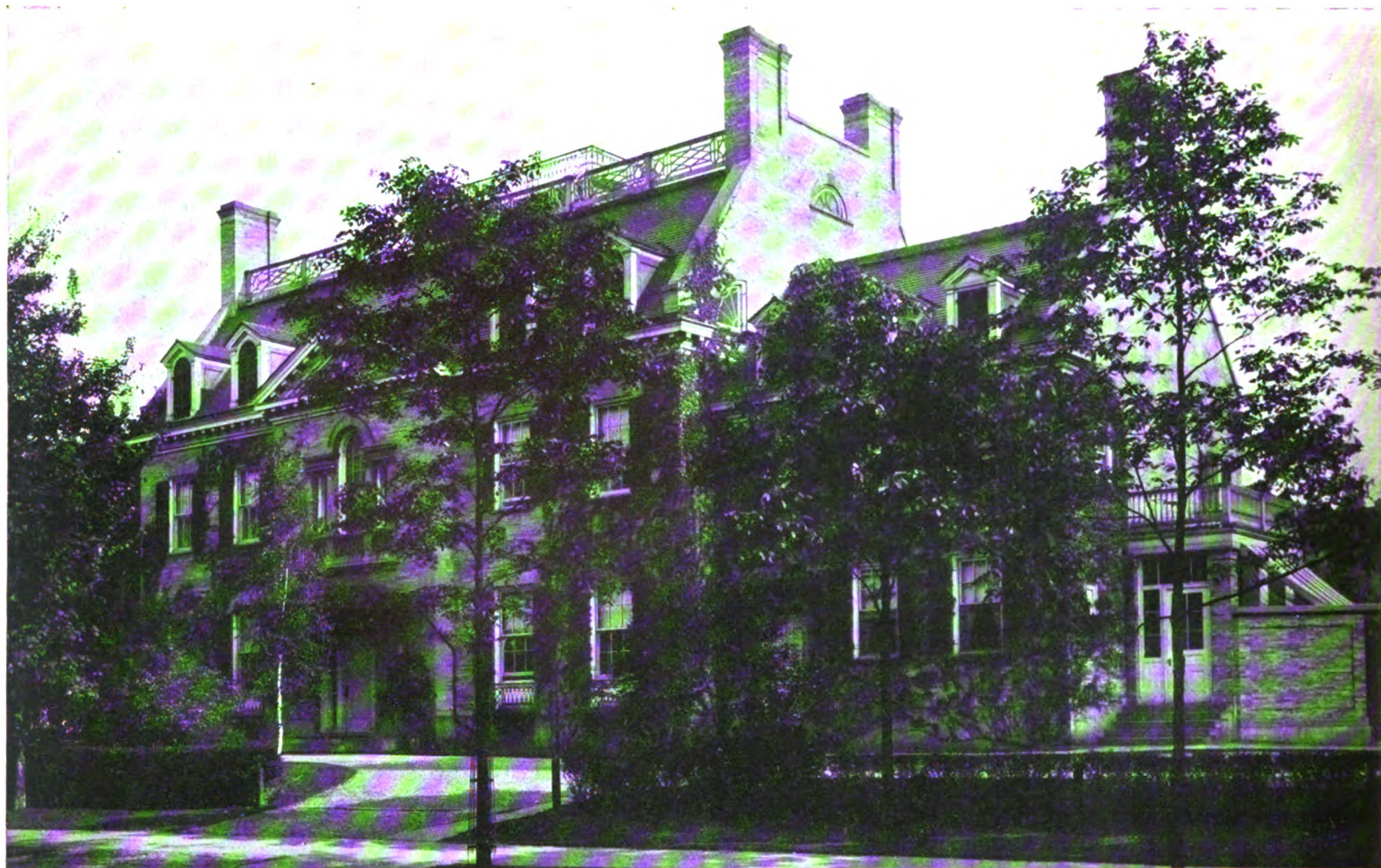
Here is a veritable treasure-house of old furniture and portraits, rare china and silver. There is a spacious dignity about this house which is often lacking in the modern colonial dwelling. There is no crowding of china and old furniture here. Every old piece has its setting, and is not disturbed by its neighbor. Many collectors of things colonial might take to heart some of the lesson taught by these rooms.

The hall is toned in yellow, from which opens a reception-room, hung in a plain color, which is not quite terra-cotta nor quite mahogany. It makes an admirable background for the deeper tones of the old furniture, and for the pictures in dull gold frames. Among the old canvases is a fine allegorical painting by Benjamin West. The beautiful mantel is supported by Corinthian columns, with capitals in gold. This treatment was suggested by an extremely interesting old fire frame of gilt that had long been a family possession. The architects have been very successful in working out the scheme.



RESIDENCE OF WILLIAM S. WICKS, ESQ.  
Green & Wicks, Architects





RESIDENCE OF ROBERT K. ROOT, ESQ.  
McKim, Mead & White, Architects

The mistress of the house has added to the beauty of the plan by keeping the mantel very simple. A fine old clock and two candlesticks of fire gilt fit into their places as if made for this room alone. The furniture of the room is of Heppelwhite and Chippendale design. The upholstery is all in mahogany tones, and the effect is pleasing and unusual. The woodwork here, as elsewhere, is white and very well designed.

The pictures in the house form a notable collection. Over the mantel in the library is a rare portrait of Washington, and in the dining-room are a number of extremely interesting family portraits. The walls of the library are a strong deep green, and those of the dining-room are in a mahogany, a color several degrees lighter than the shade chosen for the reception-room. The dining-room lingers long in the memory. It is of generous dimensions, and furnished in the finest examples of eighteenth-century cabinet-making. There is nothing in the room to mar

the old-time atmosphere. There are two sideboards covered with silver and old Sheffield plate, several serving-tables, cupboards filled with old china, and portraits of distinguished men and women. The mantel is severely simple. It is faced with brick

the same color as the walls. An unusual piece of old mahogany is a two-paneled screen, showing a simple design in inlay. The bedrooms have many conveniences that were not known in the eighteenth century, but the quaintly flowered walls and four-poster beds give the old-time flavor, and the unity of the house is preserved.

On Delaware Avenue is the old Wilcox homestead, full of historic associations. An interesting bit of modern history is connected with it, for in the library Theodore Roosevelt took oath of office, September 14, 1901. This house has a beautiful dining-room in the new part of the house built by Mr. George Cary of Buffalo. The fine white paneling makes an effective setting for old portraits and



DINING-ROOM IN THE RESIDENCE OF ANSLEY WILCOX, ESQ.  
George Cary, Architect





DINING-ROOM IN THE RESIDENCE OF HARLOW C. CURTISS, ESQ.  
Esenwein & Johnson, Architects

old furniture. Another house which is closely associated in the minds of Americans with the Wilcox homestead is the home of J. G. Milburn, Esq. This will always rank first in interest among Buffalo's historic houses. The library is particularly attractive, and is another example of Mr. Cary's work. The Country Club house is also the work of this architect. The interior decorating was done by Prentice of Buffalo.

The city has been fortunate in its architects. Whether the dwellings are the work of Buffalo designers or out-of-town men, there is a refreshing absence of the monstrosities that are found in most cities. Impossible turrets, towers, and domes are not in evidence. The colonial style has been extremely well handled, and there is every variety—Northern, Southern, and pure Georgian. A notable example of Southern colonial is the home of Dr. Alexander M. Curtiss, on West Ferry Street, built

by Esenwein and Johnson. This is as fine in its way as the house of his brother on Delaware Avenue. Both are splendid specimens of two types. The furnishings of the West Ferry Street house are in the spirit of the colonial period. The rooms have all the charm that white paneling and old furniture can give to an interior and the charm here is very great.

The West Ferry Street homes are many and interesting, and some of them will be discussed in a later article. The Albright house, built by Green and Wicks, is here. It is late French Gothic. Seen from the street, through a long vista of trees, it has the character of an old château. Not far from this house is the picturesque, vine-clad home of George P. Sawyer, Esq., which was the first Buffalo house designed by Green and Wicks.

The city has now more than a dozen homes built by these gifted men.



A BRICK HOUSE WITH TILED ROOF, ESENWEIN & JOHNSON, ARCHITECTS